

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SUBJECT: **ORGAN DONOR IDENTIFICATION**

REFERENCE NO. 819

**PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for emergency medical services (EMS) personnel such as EMTs, paramedics, firefighters or other emergency rescuers to comply with statutory requirements to make a reasonable search for documentation which identifies patients as organ/body part donors when death appears imminent.

**AUTHORITY:** California Health and Safety Code, Division 7, Chapter 3.5, Sections 7150.10, 7150.15, and 7150.55

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Imminent death:** For the purposes of this policy, "imminent death" means any situation in which illness or injuries in the adult patient are so severe that, in the opinion of EMS personnel, death will occur before the patient arrives at the hospital. For purposes of this policy, this definition does not include conscious patients, regardless of the severity of illness/injury.

**Reasonable search:** A reasonable search consists of a brief, rapid attempt made by EMS personnel to locate the patient's driver's license or other documentation of anatomical gift intent. **IN NO EVENT SHOULD A SEARCH BE CONDUCTED IF THAT EFFORT WILL DEPRIVE THE PATIENT OF LIFE-SAVING CARE OR TRANSPORT.**

**Document of gift:** A document of gift is a donor card; a statement attached to, or imprinted on, a motor vehicle operator's license; a will; or other writing used to make an anatomical gift. This includes a statement recorded on the Donate Life California Organ and Tissue Donor Registry or other donor registry.

**PRINCIPLES:**

1. An anatomical gift of a donor's body or part may be made during the life of the donor for the purpose of transplantation, therapy, research, or education by any of the following individuals:
  - a. The donor, if they are 18 years or older.
  - b. The donor, if they are an emancipated minor.
  - c. The donor, if they are between 15 and 18 years of age, written consent of the parent or guardian is required.
  - d. An agent of the donor, provided that the power of attorney for health care or other record expressly permits the agent to make an anatomical gift.
2. The requirement to make a reasonable search for documentation that a patient is an organ donor or that they have refused to make an anatomical gift applies to EMS personnel such as EMTs, paramedics, firefighters or other emergency rescuers finding the individual

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APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Director, EMS Agency

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Medical Director, EMS Agency

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PROCEDURES:

1. EMS personnel treating or transporting a patient whose death appears imminent shall make a reasonable search for a document of gift or other information identifying the individual as a donor or as an individual who made a refusal.
2. If the documentation is located, EMS personnel shall report this information verbally to the following, as indicated:
  - a. The base hospital, if contact is established.
  - b. The attending physician in the emergency department.
  - c. Law enforcement officer or coroner's personnel at the scene if the patient has died on scene and will not be transported to the hospital.
3. If the patient is transported to the hospital, the person responsible for conducting the search shall send the document of gift or refusal to the hospital.

## DOCUMENTATION:

1. In addition to the verbal reports described above, EMS personnel shall enter brief remarks in the "Comments" section of the EMS Report Form, e.g., "organ donor per driver's license, base hospital (or coroner, or law enforcement, etc.) advised verbally".
2. If so advised, MICNs shall make a brief note to this effect on the Base Hospital Form.

## CROSS REFERENCE:

Prehospital Care Manual:Ref. No. 814, **Determination/Pronouncement of Death in the Field**